United States Patent [19]

Schmidt

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[54] **CHARACTER DATA INPUT KEYBOARD ARRANGEMENT HAVING CENTRAL MATRIX OF KEYS**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **400/486;** 400/489; 340/365 R

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 400/489, 486, 485, 484; D18/1; 340/365 VL, 365 R

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A manual data entry keyboard, having left hand and right hand clusters of keys, is separated medially by an interposed, auxilliary matrix of keys comprising an [m×n] array of keys, where m and n are integers—m at least 4, n at least 1. In one embodiment the matrix includes a [5×2] array of keys which serve as a numeric keypad, accessed by the index fingers and thumbs, obsoleting the [1×10] array of number keys commonly included with the QWERTY cluster in existing English language keyboard arrangements. Top row accessory characters may be entered without the shift and are grouped in clusters in the top row and positioned to reflect the order of entry of elements of these groups in the usual flow of data. Punctuation keys are clustered in the right hand area of the keyboard, and except for the period and comma, are readily accessed by the little finger. Columns of keys, additional to the [5×2] keypad may be included in the keyboard, either or both medially and/or laterally to the two columns of the [5×2] array. Such added columns may serve as cursor control and editing keys, arithmetic operator keys, numeric punctuation keys, etc. Numeric entry is facilitated in arrangements that provide the [0] and [1] keys in the bottom row to be served by the thumbs while all fingers maintain home position on the keyboard.

35 Claims, 8 Drawing Figures